Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of producing a ceramic porous body having partition walls, the ceramic porous body comprising ~~at least Si as a chemical component~~cordierite, the method comprising:

adding a porous silica powder having a bulk density of 0.2 to 1g/cm^3 or a porous silica-containing compound powder having a bulk density of 0.2 to 1g/cm^3 to a forming raw material to prepare a ceramic clay in an amount of 5 to 40 vol. % in the total amount of the forming raw material so as to make the porous silica powder or the porous silica-containing compound powder work sufficiently as a pore-forming material and as at least a part of an Si-source for forming a cordierite in the ceramic clay,

forming the resulting ceramic clay into a specific shape, and

firing the formed ~~product~~ceramic clay so as to convert a material of the ceramic clay to cordierite,

wherein the partition walls have pores and a porosity of at least ~~40%~~50%, said pores being formed mainly by virtue of the porous silica powder or the porous silica-containing compound.

2. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the porous silica powder or the porous silica-containing compound powder has been melted during the firing and reacted with other components of the forming raw material to form a silica-containing compound.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the porous silica powder or the porous silica-containing compound powder is an amorphous silica powder or an amorphous silica-containing compound powder.

5-7. (Canceled)

8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the ceramic porous body has a honeycomb shape.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~A method of producing a ceramic porous body comprising at least Si as a chemical component, the method~~ The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

adding silica gel granules with a 50% particle size (D_{50}) of 10 to 100 μm to ~~a forming~~the forming raw material to prepare ~~a clay,~~

~~forming the resulting ceramic clay into a specific shape, and~~

~~firing the formed product~~the ceramic clay.

10. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 9, wherein the silica gel granules have a particle size distribution defined by the following expressions (1) and (2) with respect to the 50% particle size (D_{50}):

$$0.1 \leq D_{10}/D_{50} \leq 0.5 \quad (1)$$

$$2 \leq D_{90}/D_{50} \leq 5 \quad (2)$$

where, D_{50}: 50% particle size, D_{10}: 10% particle size, and D_{90}: 90% particle size.

11. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 9, wherein the silica gel granules include particles with an aspect ratio of 5 or less in an amount of 90 mass% or more.

12. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 9, wherein the silica gel granules do not substantially include particles with a particle size exceeding 100 μm.

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 9, wherein the silica gel granules are formed of a porous body with a pore volume of 0.4 to 2.0 ml/g.

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 9, wherein the silica gel granules are particles with a specific surface area (JIS R1626) of 100 to 1000 m^2/g.

15. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 9, wherein Si accounts for 95 to 99.99 mol% of the total metal elements of the silica gel.

16. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 9, wherein the silica gel granules are obtained by sieving silica gel raw material granules with a 50% particle size (D_{50}) of 10 to 150 μm through a screen with a pore diameter of 44 to 210 μm to control the 50% particle size (D_{50}) within a range of 10 to 100 μm.

17. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 16, wherein granules having a particle size distribution defined by the following expressions (3) and (4) with respect to the 50% particle size (D_{50}) are used as the silica gel raw material granules:

$$0.05 \leq \underline{D_{10}}/\underline{D_{50}} \leq 0.5 \quad (3)$$

$$2 \leq \underline{D_{90}}/\underline{D_{50}} \leq 8 \quad (4)$$

where, D_{50}: 50% particle size, D_{10}: 10% particle size, and D_{90}: 90% particle size.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 16, wherein the silica gel granules are sieved using an air jet sieving method.

19. (Currently Amended) A method ~~of producing a formed product which produces~~for producing a ceramic porous body ~~upon firing, the method comprising adding silica gel granules or silica gel granules and~~according to claim 1, wherein water-absorbing polymer particles are further added to the ~~to a~~ forming raw material when the porous silica powder is added~~to prepare a clay~~, and integrally forming the resulting ceramic clay into ~~a formed product~~the ceramic porous body.

20. (Currently Amended) A method ~~of producing a formed product which produces~~for producing a ceramic porous body ~~upon firing, the method comprising adding silica gel granules or silica gel granules and~~according to claim 1, wherein water-absorbing polymer particles are further added to the ~~to a~~ forming raw material when the porous silica powder is added~~to prepare a clay~~, and forming the resulting ceramic clay into ~~a formed product~~the ceramic porous body using a continuous forming machine.

21. (Canceled)

22. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein the porous silica powder is a silica gel having a porosity of 95 to 99.99 mole% and the porous silica-containing compound powder is magnesium silicate.